

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 0486

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AZOREAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: PONTA DELGADA 481

1. THE JUNTA REGIONAL HAS RECEIVED ADDITIONAL WORD THAT THE GOP IS RECONSIDERING THE NEW DECREE LAW REGARDING IT'S AUTHORITY AND THE JUNTA HAS DECIDED TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER JANUARY 1 TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE FURTHER. TWO JUNTA NEMBERS, MONJARDINO AND ALMEIDA, AFFIRMED THAT IF THE GOP DOES NOT REVISE THE DECREE LAW, THE JUNTA WILL MAKE PUBLIC THE JUNTA'S REQUEST FOR INCREASED POWERS AND THE GOP RESPONSE, WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT THIS WILL TRIGGER DEMONSTRATIONS. THE JUNTA MAY NOT RESIGN. INSTEAD, IT MAY REMAIN IN OFFICE TO DEAL WITH THE DEMANDS OF THE PEOPLE WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE INDEPENDENCE. MONJARDINO AND ALMEIDA BELIEVE JUNTA HAS THE OBLIGATION TO BE ON THE SIDE OF THE PEOPLE. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY HAVE DONE A LITTLE CONTINGENCY PLANNING, AND THAT INCLUDES POSSIBLE REQUESTS FOR UNSPECIFIED FOREIGN ASSISTANCE.

2. PPD DEPUTY NATALINO VIVEIROS SAID THAT AZOREANS WERE PREPARED TO CARRY THIS ISSUE QUOTE TO THE END UNQUOTE. HE HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT COSTA GOMEZ AND PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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UNHAPPY WITH THE COUNCIL OF MINISTER DECREE LAW AND FAVORED A

REVISION. VIVEIROS ADDED THAT WHEN HE GOES TO LISBON HE PLANS TO ASK THE EMBASSIES OF FRANCE AND WEST GERMANY TO INTERCEED WITH THE SOCIALISTSON BEHALF OF THE AZORES.

3. THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY FOR THE THREE DISTRICTS OF THE AZORES ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE SAYING THAT THE NEW DECREE LAW IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR THE JUNTA REGIONAL AND NEEDS ADJUSTING. HOWEVER, THE NEW LAW DOES NOT RESTRICT POWERS GRANTED IN THE ORIGINAL DECREE LAW AND WAS NOT A STEP BACKWARDS. IN ADDITION, THE COMMITTEE SENT A LETTER TO GENERAL MAGALHAES NOTING THAT THE EIGHTH COMMITTEE OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WILL CHANGE ITS CURRENT TEXT IN LINE WITH "POSITIVE" ELEMENTS IN THE DRAFT STATUTE OF AUTONOMY (SEE PONTA DELGADA 466) AND THEREFORE REQUESTED AN EXTENSION OF PUBLIC DEBATE OF THE DRAFT STATUTE.

4. THE LOCAL PRESS HAS BEEN FULL OF EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES REQUESTING THE JUNTA TAKE A FIRM STAND IN ITS CURRENT DISPUTE WITH THE GOP EVEN THOUGH THE DETAILS OF THE PROBLEM ARE UNKNOWN.

5. COMMENT: THE SOCIALISTS' COMMUNIQUE AND LETTER SHOW AN EVOLUTION IN THE LOCAL PARTY'S POSITION TOWARDS SUPPORT FOR A STRONGER AUTONOMY. SOCIALIST STRENGTH HERE HAS ERODED IN RECENT MONTHS, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE THE PARTY HAS NOT SUPPORTED A STRONG AUTONOMY. NOW, APPARENTLY THE PARTY IS TRYING TO HALT THE EROSION. ALTHOUGH THE ISSUE OF THE NEW DECREE LAW ON THE JUNTA REGIONAL HASR BEEN POSTPONED FOR ANOTHER WEEK, ITS POTENTIAL SERIOUSNESS HAS NOT DIMINISHED.

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